United Nations A/55/227

General Assembly

Distr.: General
4 August 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session

Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session

Need to examine the exceptional international situation pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan, to ensure that the fundamental right of its twenty-three million people to participate in the work and activities of the United Nations is fully respected

Letter dated 3 August 2000 from the representatives of Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Grenada, Honduras, Malawi, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Solomon Islands and Swaziland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instruction of our respective Governments, we have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the fifty-fifth session of the Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Need to examine the exceptional international situation pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan, to ensure that the fundamental right of its twenty-three million people to participate in the work and activities of the United Nations is fully respected". Pursuant to rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, we attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II).

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Annex I to the letter dated 3 August 2000 from the representatives of Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Grenada, Honduras, Malawi, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Solomon Islands and Swaziland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Explanatory memorandum

As Tuvalu of the South Pacific is to be admitted to the United Nations later this year, the Republic of China on Taiwan will then be the only country in the world that remains excluded from the United Nations. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine this situation from a whole new perspective and redress this mistaken omission. There are many reasons why the Republic of China should have the right to play a role in the United Nations:

1. **The Republic of China is a democratic country and its democratically elected Government is the sole legitimate one that can actually represent the interests and wishes of the people of Taiwan in the United Nations.**

The Republic of China and the People's Republic of China have coexisted on their respective sides of the Taiwan Strait, with neither subject to the other's rule. Over that past half-century, each side has developed its own political system, social values and foreign relations. Therefore, each of these two sides can speak for and represent only the people actually under its jurisdiction on its respective side of the Taiwan Strait.

2. **The exclusion of the Republic of China from the United Nations and its related agencies has created a major and serious obstacle for both the Government and the people of the Republic of China in their pursuit of normal participation in international organizations and activities.**

From 1950 to 1971, the United Nations considered the question of China's representation. In October 1971, at its twenty-sixth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 2758 (XXVI), in which it decided that the China seat would be taken by the People's Republic of China. That resolution, however, failed to address the issue of legitimate representation for the people of Taiwan in the United Nations.

Worse still, while the representatives of the Government of the Republic of China are excluded from all United Nations activities, the Republic of China's lack of membership in the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 2758 (XXVI) have too often been used as pretexts to deter or discourage the participation of individuals and non-governmental groups of the Republic in United Nations activities and all activities related to all functions of the Economic and Social Council.

This unjust exclusion of civil associations and individuals of the Republic of China runs counter to the predominant trend of involving all possible participants in international affairs and the United Nations call for global and comprehensive partnership.

3. The Republic of China, a country with significant achievements, is a constructive and responsible member of the international community.

The Republic of China has played a positive role in promoting world trade, eradicating poverty and advancing human rights, a fact that merits recognition by Members of the United Nations.

The Republic of China has a population of 23 million and a democratic system. Above all, it is a peace-loving country, which is able and willing to carry out the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations.

Today the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan enjoy a high degree of freedom and democracy. The Republic held its first direct presidential election in March 1996, the first time in history that the Republic elected its highest leader by popular vote. In March 2000, Mr. Chen Shui-bian of the Democratic Progressive Party was elected in the second direct presidential election, marking the first-ever change of political parties for the presidency of the Republic of China. Since Mr. Chen's inauguration on 20 May 2000, the people of the Republic have witnessed a peaceful transition of power as a result of a democratic election.

The Republic of China is one of the most successful examples of economic development in the twentieth century and is now the world's nineteenth largest economy in terms of GNP, and the fourteenth most important trading country. It is also a major investor in East Asia and possesses the third largest amount of foreign reserves in the world.

The Republic of China is also a humanitarian-minded country. Over the years it has sent over 10,000 experts to train technicians in countries all over the world, especially the countries of Asia, the South Pacific, Latin America and Africa, to help develop their agricultural, fishery and livestock industries. It also has provided billions of United States dollars in disaster relief throughout the world, including the People's Republic of China, over the past several years, and has responded to United Nations appeals for emergency relief and rehabilitation assistance to countries suffering from natural disasters and wars.

Currently, the Republic of China contributes capital to regional development programmes through international financial institutions such as the Asian Development Bank, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration, the Inter-American Development Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The Republic of China is fully committed to observing the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to its integration into the international human rights system spearheaded by the United Nations.

4. The United Nations should take note of the recent conciliatory gestures of the Republic of China towards the People's Republic of China and play a facilitating role by providing a forum for their reconciliation and rapprochement.

On 20 June 2000, President Chen called upon the leader of the People's Republic of China, President Jiang Zemin, to work together to bring about a historic summit like that just held between North and South Korea. He indicated that he would be willing to sit down with Mr. Jiang to pursue cross-strait reconciliation, without specifying any preconditions, format or location. He also urged the leaders

of the two sides to use their wisdom and creativity, based on the principles of democracy and parity, to jointly create a favourable environment for the betterment of cross-strait relations. He further voiced the hope that the leaders of the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China would respect the free choice of the people on both sides and work together to resolve the question of a future "one-China".

As an organization dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of world peace, the United Nations should facilitate a reconciliation and peace process between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait. The United Nations can serve as a forum to foster mutual understanding and goodwill between the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China so that confidence-building measures can be developed in time, thus reducing cross-strait tension.

5. **The participation of the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations poses no barrier to the future peaceful resolution of the differences between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait; indeed, it can be conducive to regional peace and security.**

The examples of the former East Germany and West Germany, and now of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, serve as precedents for parallel representation of divided nations in the United Nations. The exchanges between East Germany and West Germany via the United Nations and other international organizations contributed not only to regional peace and security, but also to their peaceful unification in 1990. The simultaneous admission of two Koreas into the United Nations in 1991 also helped to build mutual trust and confidence between the two, which culminated in the June 2000 summit.

The strategic position of Taiwan makes it a focal point of the entire Asia and Pacific region. Accordingly, the stability of the Taiwan Strait and its periphery is vital to the maintenance of peace and security for the region in particular and for the world in general. In the absence of an institutionalized crisis-management mechanism that covers the relations across the Taiwan Strait, a role for the Republic of China on Taiwan in the United Nations would bring the area under the peace and security mechanism contained in the United Nations, thus enhancing the maintenance of peace and security in the region. The United Nations should therefore encourage both sides of the Taiwan Strait to work and cooperate in the Organization and its related organizations.

6. **The General Assembly should act to ensure that the voice of the 23 million people on Taiwan is heard in the United Nations and its related organizations.**

Tremendous changes have taken place globally in the past two decades. The world is faced with increasingly demanding tasks in eradicating disease and poverty, protecting the environment and endangered species, regulating human migration and population growth, and promoting human rights and dignity. Many of those issues call for global and comprehensive efforts that transcend traditional national boundaries. To be more effective and efficient, these joint efforts require not only broad support and cooperation from national Governments, but also greater involvement and participation from local governments, civil associations and even individuals. As the world organization with the most comprehensive functions, the United Nations system should invite every possible participant of the international

community to join the partnership to further the objectives and purposes of the United Nations.

At the dawning of the new millennium, people around the world welcome the Israeli-Arab peace talks, the summit between the North and South Koreas and the imminent accession of both the Republic of China and the People's Republic of China to the World Trade Organization. All these events signify that reconciliation has replaced confrontation as the dominant spirit of the new century and the mainstream value of the international community. It is high time that the United Nations seriously reconsider the appropriateness of continued exclusion of the Republic of China from this most important global forum. With the participation of the Republic of China, the United Nations can live up to its principle of universality, achieve its goal of preventive diplomacy, and facilitate the cross-strait reconciliation and peace process.

Annex II to the letter dated 3 August 2000 from the representatives of Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Grenada, Honduras, Malawi, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Nicaragua, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Solomon Islands and Swaziland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Draft resolution

The General Assembly,

Considering the fact that the twenty-three million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan are the only remaining people in the world that still do not have actual and legitimate representation in the United Nations,

Recognizing that since 1949 the Government of the Republic of China has exercised effective control and jurisdiction over the Taiwan area while the Government of the People's Republic of China has exercized effective control and jurisdiction over the Chinese mainland during the same time period,

Acknowledging that the Republic of China on Taiwan is a constructive and responsible member of the international community, with a democratic system and a strong, dynamic economy,

Observing that the strategic location of Taiwan is vital to the peace and security of the East Asian and Pacific regions and the world,

Understanding that the determination of future relations between the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China should fully respect the free will of the people on both sides and be implemented in a peaceful way,

Mindful of the fact that the Republic of China has committed itself to peaceful resolution of differences with the People's Republic of China and has repeatedly offered friendly and conciliatory gestures towards the leadership of the People's Republic of China,

Noting the declaration of the Government of the Republic of China on Taiwan that it accepts without condition the obligations contained in the Charter of the United Nations, that it is able and willing to carry out those obligations, and that it is fully committed to observing the principles and spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Affirming the significance that recognition of and respect for the fundamental rights of the twenty-three million people of the Republic of China on Taiwan would have for upholding the principles and spirit of the Charter of the United Nations,

Decides:

(a) To respect fully the choice of the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait with regard to their future relations and to reject any unilateral arrangement or forced resolution of their differences by other than peaceful means;

(b) To express its concern about cross-strait tension and its possible impact upon regional peace, stability and prosperity, and to encourage the Republic of China on Taiwan and the People's Republic of China to resume their dialogue and communications on a peaceful basis and equal footing;

(c) To establish a working group of the General Assembly with the mandate of examining thoroughly the exceptional international situation pertaining to the Republic of China on Taiwan so as to ensure that its twenty-three million people participate, with a direct and representative voice, in the United Nations and its related agencies.